

CSBG

Community Services Block Grant

FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2005 and 2006 State Plan

State of Nebraska

**Nancy Montanez, Health and Human Services
Director of Designated Lead Agency**

Prepared By:
Betty Medinger, CSBG Program Administrator
and
Karen Parde, CSBG Program Manager
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Economic and Family Support
CSBG Unit
P.O. Box 95044
Lincoln, NE 68509-5044
(402) 471-9264
(402) 471-9597 FAX
karen.parde@hhss.state.ne.us

I. Federal Fiscal Years Covered by the State Plan and Application

Federal Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 State Plan

III. Executive Summary:

A. CSBG State Legislation: There is no state statute governing the Community Services Block Grant program in Nebraska.

B. Lead State Agency: The Governor has designated the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to act as the lead state agency for administration of the Community Services Block Grant. (see attachment A) Nancy Montanez is the current Director of this agency.

C. Public Hearing Requirements:

(1) Public Hearing: A public hearing for the Federal Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 CSBG State Plan was held on August 5, 2004. The public hearing was advertised in the Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha World Herald which have statewide distribution.

(2) Legislative Hearing: The Department will hold a legislative hearing in October 2004 on the Federal Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 CSBG State Plan, as required by law.

(3) Public Inspection of the Plan: The plan was sent to community action agency offices in June for comment. In July, Nebraska made the CSBG Federal Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 State Plan available for public review and comment by placing public notice advertisements in the State's two newspapers which have statewide distribution: the Omaha World Herald and the Lincoln Journal-Star. The plan was also posted to the HHSS web site for the benefit of all interested parties. Copies are provided to anyone upon request.

2003 CSBG STATE PLAN

NEBRASKA

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ACT as amended (42U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) STATUTORY ASSURANCES

The designee of the chief executive of the State of Nebraska certifies that the State of Nebraska hereby agrees to the Assurances in Section 676 of the Act, as follows:

A. Programmatic Assurances

1) Funds made available through this grant or allotment will be used:

- (a) To support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farm workers, and elderly low-income individuals and families to enable the families and individuals to:
 - (i) remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency (including self-sufficiency for families and individuals who are attempting to transition off a State program carried out under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act);
 - (ii) secure and retain meaningful employment;
 - (iii) attain an adequate education, with particular attention toward improving literacy skills of low-income families in the communities involved, which may include carrying out family literacy initiatives;
 - (iv) make better use of available income;
 - (v) obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment;
 - (vi) obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants, or other means to meet immediate and urgent family and individual needs; and
 - (vii) achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved, including the development of public and private grassroots partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, private foundations, and other public and private partners to document best practices based on successful grassroots intervention in urban areas, to develop methodologies for widespread replication; and strengthen and improve relationships with local law enforcement agencies, which may include participation in activities such as neighborhood or community policing efforts;
- (b) To address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs that have demonstrated success in preventing or reducing youth crime, such as programs for the establishment of violence-free zones that would involve youth development and intervention models (such as models involving youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs); and after-school child care programs; and
- (c) To make more effective use of, and to coordinate with, other programs (including State welfare reform efforts). [676(b)(1)]

(2) To describe how the State intends to use discretionary funds made available from the remainder of the grant or allotment described in Section 675C(b) of the Act in accordance with the community services block grant program, including a description of how the State will support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the community services block grant program; [676(b)(2)]

(3) To provide information provided by eligible entities in the State, including:

(a) a description of the service delivery system, for services provided or coordinated with funds made available through grants made under Section 675C(a) of the Act, targeted to low-income individuals and families in communities within the State;

(b) a description of how linkages will be developed to fill identified gaps in services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management, and follow-up consultations;

(c) a description of how funds made available through grants made under Section 675(a) will be coordinated with other public and private resources; and,

(d) a description of how local entities will use the funds to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the community services block grant, which may include fatherhood initiatives and other initiatives with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging effective parenting. [676(b)(3)]

(4) To ensure that eligible entities in the State will provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals.[676(b)(4)]

(5) That the State and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals and to avoid duplication of such services, and State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities in the State and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; [676(b)(5)]

(6) To ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance) are conducted in such communities.[676(b)(6)]

(7) To permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 678D of the Act. [676(b)(7)]

(8) That any eligible entity in the State that received funding in the previous fiscal year through a community services block grant under the community services block grant program will not have its funding terminated under this subtitle, or reduced below the proportional share of funding the entity received in the previous fiscal year unless, after providing notice and an opportunity for a hearing on the record, the State determines that cause exists for such termination or such reduction, subject to review by the Secretary as provided in Section 678C(b) of the Act.[676(b)(8)]

(9) That the State and eligible entities in the State will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income

residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations. [‘676(b)(9)]

(10) To require each eligible entity in the State to establish procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, or religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization, or low-income individuals, to be inadequately represented on the board (or other mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation. [‘676(b)(10)]

(11) To secure from each eligible entity in the State, as a condition to receipt of funding, a community action plan (which shall be submitted to the Secretary, at the request of the Secretary, with the State plan) that includes a community- needs assessment for the community served, which may be coordinated with community-needs assessments conducted for other programs; [‘676(b)(11)]

(12) That the State and all eligible entities in the State will, not later than fiscal year 2001, participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System, another performance measure system for which the Secretary facilitated development pursuant to Section 678E(b) of the Act .[‘676(b)(12)]

(13) To provide information describing how the State will carry out these assurances. [‘676(b)(13)] (This is the Narrative CSBG State Plan)

B. Administrative Assurances

The State further agrees to the following, as required under the Act:

(1) To submit an application to the Secretary containing information and provisions that describe the programs for which assistance is sought under the community services block grant program prepared in accordance with and containing the information described in Section 676 of the Act. [‘675A(b)]

(2) To use not less than 90 percent of the funds made available to the State by the Secretary under Section 675A or 675B of the Act to make grants to eligible entities for the stated purposes of the community services block grant program and to make such funds available to eligible entities for obligation during the fiscal year and the succeeding fiscal year, subject to the provisions regarding recapture and redistribution of unobligated funds outlined below. [‘675C(a)(1) and (2)]

(3) In the event that the State elects to recapture and redistribute funds to an eligible entity through a grant made under Section 675C(a)(1) when unobligated funds exceed 20 percent of the amount so distributed to such eligible entity for such fiscal year, the State agrees to redistribute recaptured funds to an eligible entity, or require the original recipient of the funds to redistribute the funds to a private, nonprofit organization, located within the community served by the original recipient of the funds, for activities consistent with the purposes of the community services block grant program. [‘675C (a)(3)]

(4) To spend no more than the greater of \$55,000 or 5 percent of its grant received under Section 675A or the State allotment received under section 675B for administrative expenses, including monitoring activities. [‘675C(b)(2)]

- (5) In states with a charity tax credit in effect under state law, the State agrees to comply with the requirements and limitations specified in Section 675(c) regarding use of funds for statewide activities to provide charity tax credits to qualified charities whose predominant activity is the provision of direct services within the United States to individuals and families whose annual incomes generally do not exceed 185 percent of the poverty line in order to prevent or alleviate poverty among such individuals and families. [675(c)]
- (6) That the lead agency will hold at least one hearing in the State with sufficient time and statewide distribution of notice of such hearing, to provide to the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use and distribution of funds to be provided through the grant or allotment under Section 675A or '675B for the period covered by the State plan. [676(a)(2)(B)]
- (7) That the chief executive officer of the State will designate, an appropriate State agency for purposes of carrying out State community services block grant program activities. [676(a)(1)]
- (8) To hold as least one legislative hearing every three years in conjunction with the development of the State plan.[676(a)(3)]
- (9) To make available for the public inspection each plan or revised State plan in such a manner as will facilitate review of and comment on the plan. [676(e)(2)]
- (10) To conduct the following reviews of eligible entities:
- (a) full onsite review of each such entity at least once during each three-year period;
 - (b) an onsite review of each newly designated entity immediately after the completion of the first year in which such entity receives funds through the community services block grant program;]
 - (c) follow-up reviews including prompt return visits to eligible entities, and their programs, that fail to meet the goals, standards, and requirements established by the State;
 - (d) other reviews as appropriate, including reviews of entities with programs that have had other Federal, State or local grants (other than assistance provided under the community services block grant program) terminated for cause. [678B(a)]
- (11) In the event that the State determines that an eligible entity fails to comply with the terms of an agreement or the State plan, to provide services under the community services block grant program or to meet appropriate standards, goals, and other requirements established by the State (including performance objectives), the State will comply with the requirements outlined in Section 678C of the Act, to:
- (a) inform the entity of the deficiency to be corrected;
 - (b) require the entity to correct the deficiency;
 - (c) offer training and technical assistance as appropriate to help correct the deficiency, and submit to the Secretary a report describing the training and technical assistance offered or stating the reasons for determining that training and technical assistance are not appropriate;
 - (d) at the discretion of the State, offer the eligible entity an opportunity to develop and implement, within 60 days after being informed of the deficiency, a quality improvement plan and to either approve the proposed plan or specify reasons why the proposed plan cannot be approved;
 - (e) after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceedings to terminate the designation of or reduce the funding to the eligible entity unless the entity corrects the deficiency. [678(C)(a)]

(12) To establish fiscal controls, procedures, audits and inspections, as required under Sections 678D(a)(1) and 678D(a)(2) of the Act.

(13) To repay to the United States amounts found not to have been expended in accordance with the Act, or the Secretary may offset such amounts against any other amount to which the State is or may become entitled under the community services block grant program. [678D(a)(3)]

(14) To participate, by October 1, 2001, and ensure that all-eligible entities in the State participate in the Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) System [678E(a)(1)].

(15) To prepare and submit to the Secretary an annual report on the measured performance of the State and its eligible entities, as described under 678E(a)(2) of the Act.

(16) To comply with the prohibition against use of community services block grant funds for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement (other than low-cost residential weatherization or other energy-related home repairs) of any building or other facility, as described in Section 678F(a) of the Act.

(17) To ensure that programs assisted by community services block grant funds shall not be carried out in a manner involving the use of program funds, the provision of services, or the employment or assignment of personnel in a manner supporting or resulting in the identification of such programs with any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or any political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election for public or party office; any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance with any such election, or any voter registration activity. [678F(b)]

(18) To ensure that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity funded in whole or in part with community services block grant program funds. Any prohibition against discrimination on the basis of age under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) or with respect to an otherwise qualified individual with a disability as provided in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.) shall also apply to any such program or activity. [678F(c)]

(19) To consider religious organizations on the same basis as other non-governmental organizations to provide assistance under the program so long as the program is implemented in a manner consistent with the Establishment Clause of the first amendment to the Constitution; not to discriminate against an organization that provides assistance under, or applies to provide assistance under the community services block grant program on the basis that the organization has a religious character; and not to require a religious organization to alter its form of internal government except as provided under Section 678B or to remove religious art, icons, scripture or other symbols in order to provide assistance under the community services block grant program. [679]

C. Other Administrative Certifications

The State also certifies the following:

(1) To provide assurances that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Circular A-110 and A-122) shall apply to a recipient of community services block grant program funds.

(2) To comply with the requirements of Public Law 103-227, Part C Environmental Tobacco Smoke, also known as the Pro-Children Act of 1994, which requires that smoking not be permitted in any portion of any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by an entity and used routinely or regularly for the provision of health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18 if the services are funded by a Federal grant, contract, loan or loan guarantee.. The State further agrees that it will require the language of this certification be included in any subawards, which contain provisions for children's services and that all subgrantees shall certify accordingly.

Signature	Date
Nancy Montanez, Director Nebraska Health and Human Services	
Director of Designated Lead Agency	

V. STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

A. Administrative Structure

(1) State Administrative Agency -- The Governor has designated the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to act as the lead state agency for administration of the Community Services Block Grant.

- a. The mission of the Nebraska Health & Human Services System is to help people live better lives through effective health and human services. This is accomplished through the use of the five operating principles:

- **Communication**

What we mean: Communication means keeping people informed; listening actively; being open and accessible; and ensuring we are accurate, timely, and complete in all we say and write.

The results we want: Our customers, the people we work with and the public, see us as open and honest in our communication, believe that we hear and understand what they say, and view us as a source of valid and reliable information that is easily accessible.

- **Cooperation**

What we mean: Cooperation means a willingness to work with others in good faith; assisting them and accepting assistance from them.

The results we want: Our customers and the people we work with join us in seeking solutions and improvements.

- **Collaboration**

What we mean: Collaboration means a willingness and ability to work together with others as equals in the pursuit of common goals.

The results we want: Our customers and the people we work with trust that we will work with them as partners in the pursuit of common goals.

- **Customer Service**

What we mean: Customer Service means responding to our customers in a respectful, timely, and effective manner.

The results we want: Our customers know we value them and are considerate of their needs.

- **Confidence**

What we mean: Confidence means reliance on us to do our jobs effectively and efficiently with integrity and fairness.

The results we want: Our customers, the people we work with and the public, learn that we do our jobs with commitment, professionalism, efficiency, and through accountable programs and accurate systems.

b. The goals and objectives of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services CSBG office are as follows:

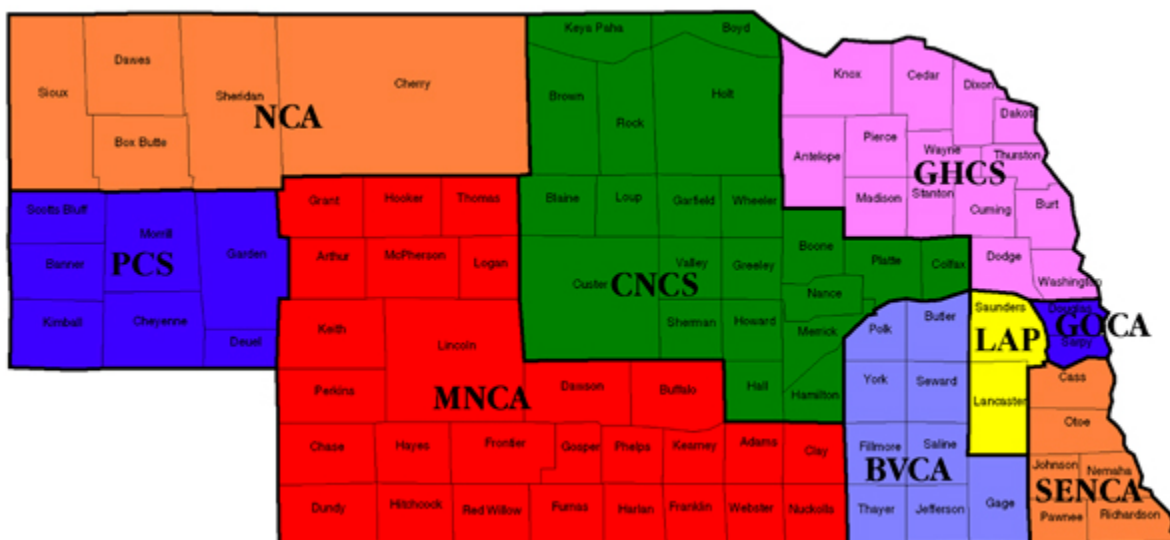
- Partner with local agencies to create an integrated service delivery system for Nebraska's families.
- Provide technical assistance to community action agencies.
- Engage in cooperative planning with non-profit, local government and other State agencies to improve the capacity of agencies to serve Nebraskans.
- Monitor eligible entities and discretionary subgrants.
- Further develop Nebraska's review process.
- Participate in meetings with Community Action Agencies and other agencies in order to support the ability for the State of Nebraska to help people live better lives.
- Continue to work with Community Action Nebraska and the ROMA task force to further develop ROMA in Nebraska.
- Work with the ROMA task force to implement the ROMA National Indicators across the State.

The State will work in partnership with Community Action Agencies to create and sustain programs and initiatives that strengthen families and communities using the six national ROMA goals to guide them.

- Low-income people become more self-sufficient
- The conditions in which low-income people live are improved
- Low-income people own a stake in their community
- Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved
- Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results
- Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

(2) Eligible Entities -- Those entities eligible for community services block grant funds are:

- Blue Valley Community Action (BVCA)
- Central Nebraska Community Services (CNCS)
- Goldenrod Hills Community Action (GHCS)
- Greater Omaha Community Action (GOCA)
- Lincoln Action Program (LAP)
- Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska (MNCA)
- Northwest Community Action (NCA)
- Panhandle Community Services (PCS)
- Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA).



(3) Distribution and Allocation of Funds -- The State of Nebraska is distributing funds in the following manner:

- 90% Restricted Funds to Nebraska's nine CAAs
- 5% Discretionary Funds
- 5% Administrative Funds

B. Description of Criteria and Distribution Formula

At least 90% of the Federal Fiscal Years 2003-2004 CSBG funds will be distributed by the State to the nine CAAs based on a formula that uses a \$125,000 base plus poverty population to determine allocations. Poverty is determined using the federal census figures. The formula is re-examined when new census information is available.

Community Action Agencies are required to submit a request to carry-over funds. They are required to report on those funds until they are expended.

C. Description of Distribution and Use of Restricted Funds

Following is the current distribution formula for CSBG funds:

Blue Valley Community Action	6.77
Central Nebraska Community Services	11.81
Goldenrod Hills Community Action	12.05
Greater Omaha Community Action	25.33
Lincoln Action Program	13.84
Mid-Nebraska Community Services	13.03
Northwest Community Action	5.14
Panhandle Community Services	6.69
Southeast Nebraska Community Action	5.34
Total	100.00

Nebraska's CAAs will continue to offer a wide range of anti-poverty programs to further the stated purposes of CSBG for the two fiscal years covered by this plan. A strong focus will be

placed on total family development through case management in which several programs and services within each agency may be utilized, depending on the needs of the family or individual.

Nebraska's CAAs will continue to lead in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill gaps in services. The State Office, State Association Office and Nebraska's CAAs realize the need to coordinate services with other local agencies and develop partnerships and will continue to focus on developing new partnerships

The State of Nebraska has not had to recapture and redistribute CSBG funds.

D. Description of Distribution and Use of Discretionary Funds

The State is assessing the current use of discretionary funds and may utilize CSBG discretionary funds in the following manner:

\$100,000 (\$50,000 comes from administrative funds) to Community Action of Nebraska (CAN), the state association representing Nebraska's nine CAAs. CAN works in collaboration with other statewide entities and organizations to provide a variety of services to the CAAs. CAN assists the State in providing technical assistance to local CAAs; preparing required state and federal data collection and other CSBG reports; conducting peer reviews; organizing the annual EITC project; facilitating statewide meetings and training sessions; and other duties as assigned by the State and Community Action of Nebraska Board.

\$100,000 to the Nebraska Children's and Families' Foundation to support Nebraska's state-wide Fatherhood Initiative.

\$42,000 to Panhandle Community Services to administer a statewide program to serve the emergency needs of migrant/seasonal farm workers. Although census figures indicate the largest concentration of migrant/seasonal farm workers exists in the panhandle area of the state, all CAAs may access these funds to meet the needs of migrant/seasonal farmworkers in their service areas. Panhandle Community Services (PCS) is also the recipient of a federal migrant health grant to meet the health needs of panhandle-area migrant/seasonal farmworkers. In addition to migrant health services, PCS provides migrant housing and a migrant Head Start program.

\$20,000 to Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska to support the Farm Crisis Hotline. The Hotline provides many forms of support for farm families in crisis, including a toll-free phone number available for family members to call for emergency assistance, mediation services, or simply someone to talk to and give moral support to individuals and families in crisis. The Farm Crisis Hotline program also provides mental health counseling vouchers to families in need. The program is managed by Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska in collaboration with Nebraska's community action agencies.

Any remaining discretionary funds will be utilized for new innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives, emergency needs, or to support unforeseen future needs of the State's CAAS.

E. Description of Use of Administrative funds

The State will use no more than the greater of \$55,000 or 5% of its annual allotted funds for program administration. Administration funds will be used for salaries, supplies, travel, staff training and other expenditures necessary to fulfill the administrative requirements and improve

the implementation of the CSBG program. Administration of the program will include administrative management, technical assistance and training, planning, and fiscal and program monitoring. A portion of the State's administration funds are set aside for local CAA expenditures of an unexpected and/or extraordinary nature or to enhance initiatives through funding discretionary projects. As stated before, \$50,000 of Administration funds goes to support Community Action of Nebraska. Any unspent administrative funds will be added to the amount available for discretionary awards.

The State of Nebraska has no charity tax credit laws in effect that utilize CSBG dollars.

F. State Community Services Program Implementation

(1) Program Overview

(a) The Service Delivery System

Nebraska's nine CAAs are private non-profit organizations and serve 100% of the counties in the state and several counties in northern Kansas. (map located in Section A(2)) A land of plains, Nebraska is primarily an agricultural state and rural in nature. Based on geography, it is the 16th largest state in the nation. Though a large percentage of the land is plains, northwest Nebraska has a small area of badlands and the largest area of sand dunes in North America. Though geographically a large state, Nebraska is 38th in the nation in population. Nebraska's two major cities, Lincoln and Omaha are located in the southeast corner of the State along with the majority of Nebraska's population. The majority of the State is rural.

The entire State has experienced drought conditions in recent years. The Governor of Nebraska sought federal agricultural disaster conditions for 21 counties in western Nebraska due to ongoing severe drought conditions. In May, tornado damage destroyed 95% of the homes and businesses in the town of Hallam (population 280) in southeastern Nebraska, 40 homes in Wilber, and many other farmsteads. It is estimated that more than 200 homes were lost in the region in storm activity. Due to these storms, many counties in southeast Nebraska have also been declared national disaster areas. In addition, heavy rains in southeast Nebraska caused flood damage to many farmlands. These conditions have brought substantial financial stress to many of Nebraska's rural families and to the agencies serving them.

The State of Nebraska does not mandate what services or activities are provided by eligible entities. Eligible entities select activities based on their assessments of community needs, analysis of their community's service delivery system, agreements with partners, and other local factors. Local agencies are empowered to select services that meet their local conditions. No two eligible entities are organized exactly alike. Most do, however, provide similar types of CSBG services and have similar delivery systems and operate satellite outreach offices.

The current CSBG eligible CAAs are:

Blue Valley Community Action PO Box 273 Fairbury, NE 68352	Counties Served	Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York. Also serving Jewell and Smith counties in Kansas
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$276,675.00
Central Nebraska Community Services PO Box 509 Loup City, NE 68853	Counties Served	Blaine, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Colfax, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Holt, Howard, Key Paha, Loup, Merrick, Nance, Platte, Rock, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$473,193.00
Goldenrod Hills Community Services PO Box 280 Wisner, NE 68791	Counties Served	Antelope, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and Wayne counties
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$489,625.00
Greater Omaha Community Action 2406 Fowler Street Omaha, NE 68111	Counties Served	Douglas and Sarpy
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$1,008,774
Lincoln Action Program 210 "O" Street Lincoln, NE 68508	Counties Served	Lancaster and Saunders
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$544,132.00
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska PO Box 2288 Kearney, NE 68848	Counties Served	Adams, Arthur, Buffalo, Chase, Clay, Dawson, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Kearney, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Nuckolls, Perkins, Phelps, Red Willow, Thomas, and Webster. Also serving Norton and Phillips counties in Kansas
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$535,849.00
Northwest Community Action Partnership 270 Pine Street Chadron, NE 69337	Counties Served	Box Butte, Cherry, Dawes, Sheridan, and Sioux
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$205,469.00
Panhandle Community Services 3350 Tenth Street Gering, NE 69341	Counties Served	Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, and Scotts Bluff counties. Also provides migrant head start services in Box Butte County
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$261,445.00
Southeast Nebraska Community Action PO Box 646 Humboldt, NE 68376	Counties Served	Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee and Richardson. Also provides weatherization services in Sarpy County
	FY 2004 CSBG allocation	\$212,683.00

(b) Linkages

Nebraska's CAAs lead the effort to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill service gaps. One of the selected state-wide ROMA goals this year is focused on the number of new partnerships developed by CAAs. Nebraska's CAAs realize the need to coordinate services with other local agencies and develop partnerships. All nine agencies provide case management services. As they work with clients, information and referrals are given on services provided by other agencies when appropriate. Because of their broad-based programs and funding, CAAs own and operate or participate in Family Resource Centers and Total Family Concept Programs. They continue to provide local leadership for continuum-of-care projects, family preservation programs, family resource centers, total family concept programs and other coalitions with a goal of service coordination that provide many benefits to low-income families and results in strengthening the family.

(c) Coordination with Other Public and Private Resources

The CAAs are leaders in Nebraska's strategy to create a unified delivery system for publicly funded health and human services that result in better services, better use of resources, and better results for the people they serve. The broad-based CAA board composition has made it very advantageous for CAAs to become an integral partner with county governments, local hospitals and health departments and others to assure the development and success of new public health structures and other services.

One example of this is a contract Southeast Nebraska Community Action Council has with the County Commissioners for operation of a County Transit. Through this partnership they provide affordable, safe transportation to the general public with priority given to elderly and/or persons with disabilities. Another example is Goldenrod Hills Community Action Partnership who has partnered with the Elkhorn Valley Health Department and Prevention Pathways to offer education and training to women with small children who want to quit smoking. Goldenrod Hills is also part of the Northeast Health Care Partnership, a collaborative effort of individuals and organizations concerned with issues related to public health in Nebraska. To address the growing needs of the Hispanic population, Blue Valley Community Action Program has formed a coalition with the district Health Departments, the Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, and private mental health providers. These are just several examples of how Nebraska's CAAs coordinate with other public and private resources. Other examples are given in other areas of this plan.

(d) Innovative Community and Neighborhood-based Initiatives

Nebraska's CAAs offer a wide range of anti-poverty programs. A strong focus is placed on total family development through case management in which several programs and services within the agency may be utilized, depending on the needs of the family or individual. Some of the programs include: Temporary Employment, Green Thumb (senior employment), Summer Youth Employment, Job Counseling, Back to School Job Fairs, Career Fairs, Nebraska Vocational Rehab, On-the-Job Training Programs, Alternative Education Programs, General Education Diploma (GED), Pre-school Education Programs, Tutoring Services, Head Start, Minority Education, Home-based Head Start, Fatherhood programs, Education Fairs, Migrant Head Start, Child Development Associate (CDA) Scholarship Programs, Tax Preparation Counseling, Consumer Education, Budget Counseling, Child Car Seat Loans, Consumer Buying Tips, Financial Planning, Thrift Shops, Weatherization Assistance, Food and Clothing Pantries, Landlord Tenant Mediation, Rental Housing, Home Ownership, HUD Certified Counselors,

Security Deposits, Housing Rehabilitation, Rent and Utility Payments, HUD Lease Program, Disaster/Flood Relief, Home Repair and Maintenance, Domestic Violence Assistance, Homeless Assistance, Eviction Assistance, Transportation, Utility Crisis Intervention, Family Mediation, Individualized Case Management, Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Youth Mothers Project, Prenatal Care, Child Care, JOBS Program, AIDS Prevention/Information, and Assistance/Referral.

Specific examples:

Lincoln Action Program has developed a series of youth initiatives under the umbrella of its Youth Opportunities Center to improve access to services helping youth succeed in life. Its Education Outreach (LEO) provides academic support for youth in middle and high school needing extra academic assistance and social support. Education Outreach also includes service learning projects, summer employment projects, summer camps, and ongoing academic tracking. The Improv program has a team comprised of 11 students trained in improvisational theatre techniques who provide presentations to community groups designed to raise awareness and generate discussion and solutions to a variety of issues facing young people. The Youth ACT (Youth and Community Together) is a long-term restorative justice program for male juvenile offenders and adolescent males at risk of crime or violence. The three sequential programmatic phases are: *Youth Law & Justice Accountability*, *Crime Victim Awareness & Community Restoration*, and *Community Restoration: Victims Response Crew*

Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska has developed three distinct parenting programs aimed toward preventing abuse and strengthening families. Skill Builders provides support services to families according to enrollment criteria related to (a) when there is a threat to have the child removed from the home or (b) if the child has been removed from the home and there is an effort to have the child returned. A Skill Builder conducts home visits and provides case management services to the family. A visitation monitor ensures the safety and well being of the child during visits with relatives. All staff members are required to participate in training.

Greater Omaha Community Action (GOCA) has entered into a partnership with Omaha Public Schools' (OPS) Safe Schools/Healthy Students to provide psycho-educational programming to students enrolled in the alternative education schools of Blackburn High School and Wilson Middle School. Two therapists from GOCA facilitated groups four days per week in each school. With the end of school year, GOCA was recognized by OPS for Excellence in Support of Alternative Education and long range plans are underway to continue the partnership for next school year.

Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska has also developed The Reach Your Destination Easily Program (R.Y.D.E.) This is the only brokeraged transit system in the State of Nebraska. The program operates a fleet of 14 buses and averages 8,000 rides a month serving residents in Buffalo County. This program came about through an extensive partnership of the CAA with the Good Samaritan Health Systems, Central Nebraska Goodwill Industries, Kearney Public Schools, Mid-Nebraska Individual Services, The Kearney Family YMCA, the Department of Health and Human Services and the City of Kearney. This program is a great example of how Nebraska's CAA's collaborate with other agencies in their areas to meet a critical community need.

Blue Valley Community Action's Lease-To-Own housing program (CROWN) enables families to rent a new home with the option to purchase after a compliance period. Single-family homes were constructed that range from 1,100-1,200 square feet each. As a certified Community

Housing Development Organization (CHDO), BVCA was able to obtain HOME funding and incorporated tax credits and bank loans to complete financing of the project. This project helps complete the continuum of care process by taking homeless families into permanent housing and eventually to homeownership.

Nebraska continues to work with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF) on a Fatherhood Initiative. The mission of the Fatherhood Initiative is to enhance the well being of children and families by supporting responsible and committed father involvement. Since its inception two years ago, the NEFI has made progress in becoming established across the state and developing linkages with programs in Nebraska and in other states. Some of the goals being worked on this next year are:

- Collaborating with the Early Childhood Training Center and the University of Nebraska on a statewide clearinghouse for research and best practice information on fathering and fatherhood programming.
- Providing regional training to programs around the state to increase their effectiveness in serving fathers.
- Convening and leading a statewide network of professionals working with fathers and families.
- Partnering with mentoring programs such as Teammates, Big Brothers & Big Sisters, Lighthouse After School program, and Omaha Public Schools to support efforts to prevent early fatherhood.

Northwest Community Action Partnership's Head Start/Early Head Start Programs were selected as Nebraska's nominee to receive the Fatherhood Program Award from the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families. They have partnered with NCFF to bring training to the Chadron area.

These are just some of the innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives taking place in Nebraska.

(2) Community Needs Assessment

As a condition for receiving CSBG funding, all Nebraska's CAAs must submit a work plan that includes a community needs assessment. The needs assessment must be completed at a minimum of once every 5 years with yearly updates. They must incorporate data from these sources: low-income residents; local elected officials and other service agencies; and statistical data. The CAAs use a variety of methods to ascertain that local needs are adequately assessed and that funds are targeted to the areas of greatest need. Existing needs assessments are utilized in all service areas.

(3) Tripartite Boards

The Nebraska State CSBG regulations include provisions for maintaining tripartite boards. In addition subgrants between the State and CAAs for Community Services Block Grant funding require that CAAs have a tri-partite board whose members are chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures to assure that not fewer than 1/3 of its members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; reside in the neighborhood served; and are able to participate actively in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programs to serve low-income communities. All CAAs are required to include tri-partite board requirements in the by-laws that govern their agency. The by-laws of all Nebraska CAAs must also include a provision whereby a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or a representative of low-income

individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on the board (or other governing mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation.

The CSBG Program Manager requests updates on Board membership at least annually and reads Board minutes to monitor Board membership. Board membership is also reviewed when the State conducts an on-site monitoring of an agency.

(4) State Charity Tax Program

The State of Nebraska has no charity tax credit laws in effect that utilize Community Service Block Grant dollars..

(5) Program Assurance 676(b)(1)(A)-(C):

(a) Assurance '676(b)

(1): Nebraska's CAA's support many activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals receiving assistance under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families to enable families and individuals. *The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided through review of work plans, review of ROMA goals, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.* These activities include:

(i) Removing barriers to self-sufficiency -- Whether providing developmental activities or basic needs, the services provided by CAA's help remove barriers that stand in the way of low-income people achieving self-sufficiency. All CAA's in Nebraska operate case management programs where low-income people can receive personal counseling and support to help with financial and emotional needs, as well as building goals for a promising future.

In addition, many other types of services such as life skills classes, first time homebuyer assistance, weatherization, and job readiness activities are designed to help low-income people make the transition to self-sufficiency. They also provide a variety of health programs that aid in the move towards self-sufficiency, including medical and dental screening, immunizations, and mental health services. Nebraska's CAAs continue to be leaders in the creation and operation of family resource centers; continuum of care projects; family preservation programs; local, regional, and state health and human service coalitions; and other local, regional, and statewide efforts at service provision and coordination for the benefit of low-income families and individuals in areas where proven needs exist and where programs are not available. All CAAs participate in the State's tax credit efforts for public education and assurance with tax filings for the EITC, CTC, and CCTC. These efforts are coordinated through the Community Action of Nebraska office.

(ii) Secure and retain meaningful employment – Nebraska's CAAs make every effort to employ low-income people within the agency. Low-income individuals, including senior citizens and youth, are provided opportunities for employment through on-the-job training, job readiness programs, referral to available job listings, assistance with resumes, travel to job interviews, etc. All programs are closely coordinated with other available employment programs in the area and provide referrals to those services. Although many of the WIA services are provided by other service providers, CAAs are

actively involved in the Workforce Investment by either contracting to provide direct services or making many referrals to these sources. They also actively participate in the WIA boards.

(iii) Attain an adequate education and improving literacy skills –Nebraska's CAA's provide a variety of educational services, including: Bright Starts, CARE, Education Outreach, Even Start, GED tutorial, Partners in Learning, Head Start/Early Head Start, literacy classes, and Youth Build. Each agency works closely with its community partners and makes referrals to agencies that provide other educational services.

The RAMBO (Rural and Metro Basic Occupations) program is administered by Community Action of Nebraska (CAN), the Nebraska community action agencies' state association. This program provides scholarships for low-income persons to receive training for professional jobs in allied health services and other areas that will enable them to greatly increase their income.

(iv) Make better use of available income – Nebraska's CAA's provide a variety of services to enable families to make better use of available income. Among the most common are income tax preparation, weatherization, budget counseling, negotiation of utility payment plans, homeowner counseling, and project first. CAA case management/family development programs focus heavily on budgeting and financial planning.

(v) Obtain and maintain adequate housing – Nebraska CAAs are actively involved in providing housing for low-income families in their areas through housing assistance and affordable housing projects; HOME,; coalition of Landlords and Tenants; homeowner counseling and household budgeting; Project FIRST; the Homeless Family Program; first-time homebuyer assistance; emergency shelters; migrant housing project; rent and utilities subsidies; and weatherization.

Seven of Nebraska's CAAs have met the requirements to be designated a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). The CHDO designation is required by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for receipt of HUD's HOME housing assistance funds. The CHDO designation allows CAAs to buy, sell, build, and manage low-income housing projects or rehabilitate and renovate local housing stock in communities for occupancy by low-income tenants. CHDO/CAAs also provide technical assistance and act as advisors to local housing programs/projects in the communities they serve.

Nebraska CAAs assist local families with completing requirements for low-interest home loan programs or obtaining rental housing and being responsible tenants. CAAs collaborate with other housing programs and agencies and public housing authorities in the state and coordinate housing activities with the Department of Economic Development to assist low-income families. In some areas the local CAA is the designated housing authority. Some Nebraska CAAs own and operate transitional housing projects where low-income families and individuals are provided affordable housing and other needed services as they work toward self-sufficiency.

(vi) Obtain emergency assistance – Eight of the nine Nebraska CAAs receive Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) dollars from the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program to address homelessness, prevention services or emergency housing needs. CAAs have

representatives on Statewide Nebraska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH) and lead subcommittee work in Continuum of Care's and accessing mainstream resources to address chronic homelessness. Additionally they are active in Statewide efforts to move Nebraska to a unified MIS.

Greater Omaha Community Action is the only agency who does not currently receive Homeless funds. They partner with the Bellevue Human Services Department and the Bellevue Ministerial Association to distribute emergency funds in the Bellevue area.

Nebraska's CAA's provide emergency assistance by providing clothing and household banks, crisis intervention programs, domestic violence programs, emergency shelters, food baskets, food pantries, youth shelters and youth violence alternatives. Rural outreach is a program that can help with various issues facing rural families or individuals. Homeless Aid provides comprehensive emergency services, including, in some cases, a transportation voucher. CAAs also administer homeless programs and provide other programs that meet the emergency needs of their low-income residents on an as-needed basis. Coordination is maintained with other resources to avoid duplication and maximize resources to meet unmet needs of communities.

The CAAs provide food and nutrition assistance to counteract malnutrition including the following Programs: Home-delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Commodities Distribution, Women, Infants and Children and other Maternal/Child Health Programs, Kids Cafe, Family Nutrition Education Programs, Holiday Food Distribution, Community Gardening.

(vii) Achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community – The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services strongly encourages, promotes and assists local partnerships to promote and enhance cooperation and collaboration among local organizations. The Department considers Nebraska's CAAs a valuable partner in these efforts. Other partners in these collaborations include local government agencies, law enforcement, faith-based organizations and the education community as well as other human service agencies. Throughout the state, outstanding collaboration has been achieved resulting in stronger and more effective communities as well as more effective use of limited local resources. CAA staff and board members are active participants in such local efforts and in many cases act as the lead agency in the collaborations.

Central Nebraska Community Services provides a good example of this. They are partnering with law enforcement, schools, health care workers, media, businesses, local organizations and others to provide education and intervention activities with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of fatal and injury-causing crashes.

Greater Omaha Community Action's Behavior Health Services is providing, through partnership, mental health, substance abuse, psychological, and psychiatric evaluations and on-going psychiatric treatment for inmates residing in Douglas County Community Corrections. They also provide mental health and/or substance abuse evaluations and treatment at a specific reduced rate for inmates of the Community Corrections Center of Omaha (CCCO). GOCA is the primary provider for CCCO inmates requiring violence prevention/anger management programming. They have also entered into a verbal agreement with Douglas County Drug Court (DCDC) as a direct referral for health, substance abuse, psychological, and psychiatric evaluations and on-going psychiatric and out-patient substance abuse treatment.

Nebraska's CAAs typically play an active role in, and receive funds from, local United Way organizations. They are also recipients of funding from many private and public (local, state, and national) foundations. Many CAAs also receive county, city and municipal government funding. CAAs have been designated as the local housing authority in some rural areas of Nebraska.

CAA staff and board members serve on many advisory boards and other state and local boards and commissions that affect the life of Nebraska's citizens. Conversely, community members serve on CAA boards and advisory committees which typically include Head Start Policy Councils, Community/Neighborhood Advisory Councils, Human Services Interagency Councils, The Commission for National Community Services, Senior/Community Centers, VISTA volunteer services, Youth Councils, Low-income Advisory Boards, Rural Volunteer Bureaus, etc.

(2) Nebraska's Community Action Agencies address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth. The welfare of children is a major focus in the domestic abuse and homeless services offered by CAAs. Panhandle Community Services operates a youth shelter and their newest Youth Service Program is SOS (Street Outreach Services). This program is reaching out to runaway and homeless youth in the panhandle of Nebraska. The PCS Crossroads Mentoring Program is a one-to-one out of school mentoring program that unites young people with a positive role model to help them reach their full potential. Their Transitional Living Program provides a complete continuum of services for runaway and homeless youth by coordinating with various PCS programs. TLP will provide housing for homeless youth between 16 and 21 either in apartments or through the Potter's Wheel Transitional Living Program. The special emphasis is to serve pregnant and parenting homeless youth and provide the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective parents and lead productive and independent lives.

Central Nebraska Community Services partners with the Teen Moms program to provide education to reduce the incidence of births to teen mothers. To stimulate children's reading, they have developed the "Family of Readers" project in two Head Start Centers which provides books for ownership and a center-based lending library that are available for children and families.

Blue Valley Community Action's Jefferson County Juvenile Justice Council uses diversion and outreach efforts to promote alternatives to illegal and violent behavior among youth. Blue Valley Community Action Partnership also now operates a youth center.

Greater Omaha Community Action's Young Men in Development program (YMID) is an after school and Summer program that provides adult male mentors, tutoring, life skills training, and community service to at-risk youth. They seek to edify young men educationally, culturally, socially, morally, and ethically. This program is designed to provide male youth with the necessary nourishment, encouragement, education and direction needed to reach full maturity. The objective of YMID is to build character, provide educational assistance, raise literacy, lower school dropout rates, and teaching self-sufficiency.

Lincoln Action Program has initiated the "Kids Cafe". Kids Cafe, which is supported by ConAgra Corporation, Second Harvest and others with an interest in improving the lives of children who are at-risk by providing meals to youth and their families, thus reducing hunger

and allowing the agency access to, and influence in, the lives of many youth to whom they would otherwise not have access. Kids Cafe enables the CAA to assist families in obtaining food and services to meet their needs.

The CAAs provide a variety of other youth services and programs, including YouthBuild, the LEO Mentoring Program, the WIA Youth Development Program and others. Many CAAs have expanded and enhanced their Head Start programs, and several operate other child care programs.

(3) The State of Nebraska and the CAAs continually strive to make more effective use of, and coordinate with, other programs. Nebraska's CAAs are leaders in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill those gaps. They are continually working to coordinate CSBG services with other service providers. The agencies have strong links with local offices of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. They coordinate and cross-refer with many organizations and businesses in their local service areas. They continue to provide local leadership for continuum-of-care projects, family preservation programs, family resource centers, and other coalitions with a goal of service coordination that provide many benefits to low-income families and results in strengthening the family.

The State of Nebraska will also continue to coordinate the Community Services Block Grant program with other public and private resources. The State recognizes that coordination must also take place at the state level. The CSBG state administrator and program manager interact with staff from other state departments to encourage linkages between state social service providers and CSBG recipients. The CSBG Administrator is also administrator of Childcare and the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program. The CSBG office is located in the Office of Economic and Family Support with Child Support, Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps and LiHEAP. The weekly administrative meetings provide frequent opportunity to collaborate and keep up with new issues in these areas. We partner with many other agencies including Foster Youth Counsels, NebHands (through the CAN office), the Department of Education, Interchurch Ministries, the Behavioral Health Reform Steering Team, and Tribal Governments on various issues and needs. Our team leads the State Plan to End Chronic Homeless Policy Group. Through EITC, we partner with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCCF), AARP, the IRS and others. These are just some of the partnerships the State of Nebraska CSBG office is involved with.

(b) Assurance 676(b)(4) to provide individuals and families financial assistance and other emergency assistance on an as-needed basis.: Nebraska's CAAs will continue to provide for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition on an emergency basis. This is accomplished through food pantries, eviction assistance programs, homeless assistance programs and other emergency programs. Coordination is maintained with other resources to avoid duplication and meet unmet needs of communities. Clothing and household goods are distributed when the situation warrants. *The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided through review of work plans, review of ROMA goals, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.*

(c) Assurance 676(b)(5) and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services: The CAAs have emerged as leaders in Nebraska's strategy to create a unified delivery system for publicly funded health and human services that result in better services, better use of resources, and better results for the people they serve.

Nebraska's CAAs have developed an outstanding case management/family development program that has received wide-spread recognition and support across the state and has acted as a catalyst for the CAAs to collaborate with other human services programs, including the state departments of Health and Human Services and Labor. The program has enabled some CAAs to receive contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services to provide case management services to TANF recipients, and has developed a strong working relationship with the Dept. of Labor to provide services under Workforce Investment Programs. Four of Nebraska's CAAs are involved in providing WIA services such as serving as a work site for work experience. The other five actively collaborate with the Department of Labor Workforce Investment in a variety of ways such as serving on the Board, serving as members of the Community Outreach Committee, and providing referrals.

The State of Nebraska assures agencies are coordinating and establishing linkages through review of work plans, review of ROMA reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(d) Assurance 676(b)(6) will ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI are conducted in such communities.: The success of Nebraska's energy assistance programs is dependent upon collaboration with many local community partners such as utility companies, local health and human service offices, county extension service offices and other local human service providers. The CAAs collaborate with many local partners as they operate weatherization programs that focus on conservation of energy and lower fuel bills. *The State of Nebraska assures coordination of services are accomplished through review of work plans, review of ROMA reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.*

(e) Assurance 676(b)(7) will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations.: The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services emphasizes coordination of programs and services to all organizations serving the poverty population. Because of their funding, board composition and broad-based programs, Nebraska's CAAs are leaders in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and fill those gaps. CAAs continue to provide local leadership to coalitions with a goal of service coordination for the benefit of low-income families. Some examples of areas where Nebraska is currently involved in coordinated efforts are hunger and homelessness, tax credits, youth development and the Fatherhood Initiative.

Lincoln Action Program has partnered with a faith based organization and a physician to provide a monthly evening medical clinic with a special emphasis on reaching those whose language may limit their ability to access care. Southeast Nebraska Community Services coordinates with the Salvation Army to send youth to Salvation Army summer camps. Northwest Community Action Partnership's RSVP program which has 540 volunteers coordinates with local faith based organizations and businesses to serve their rural area. Coordination of the Farm Hotline through Interchurch ministries and pantry service through many local churches are two other examples of how Nebraska and its CAA's are involved with faith based organizations. *The State of Nebraska assures the coordination of programs and forming of partnerships through review of work plans, review of ROMA reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes.*

G. Fiscal Controls and Monitoring

(1) State Program Monitoring: Evaluation of CSBG grantees is conducted in a variety of ways including the review of financial and progress reports, audits, minutes of Board Meetings, ROMA data and on-site monitoring and peer review. The State of Nebraska has been working on a new monitoring tool and monitoring process. The new tool will be piloted in September.

- (a) Fiscal Year 2005 will be the first year Nebraska will begin conducting annual on-site reviews at each agency. These reviews will include attending an agency board meeting. Every third year, an agency will have a combined Peer and State on-site review in place of the State only on-site review.
- (b) Nebraska does not anticipate any newly designated entities, but if one would be designated, the State would conduct an onsite review immediately upon the completion of the first year in which such entity receives funds through the community services block grant program.
- (c) The State will conduct follow-up visits to eligible entities, and their programs that fail to meet the goals, standards, and requirements established by the State;
- (d) The state will conduct other reviews as appropriate of entities with programs that have had other Federal, State or local grants terminated for cause;

(e) Dates for last audits conducted and the period covered by the audit for the State's eligible entities are as follows:

AGENCY	DATE OF LAST AUDIT	PERIOD COVERED BY AUDIT
Blue Valley Community Action	9/30/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Central Nebraska Community Services	11/19/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Goldenrod Hills Community Services	10/31/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Greater Omaha Community Action	10/29/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Lincoln Action Program	11/20/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska	12/11/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003
Northwest Nebraska Community Action	8/21/03	July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003
Panhandle Community Services	9/12/03	July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003
Southeast Nebraska Community Action	11/13/03	October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003

(2) Corrective Action, Termination and Reduction of Funding: In the event the State determines an eligible entity failed to comply with the terms of their contractual agreement established with the State or the State plan, to provide services under the CSBG program or to meet any standards, goals and other requirements established by the State (including performance objectives), the State will comply with the requirements outlined in Section 678C of the Act, to:

- a. inform the entity of the deficiency to be corrected;

- b. require the entity to correct the deficiency;
- c. offer training and technical assistance as appropriate to help correct the deficiency, and submit to the Secretary a report describing the training and technical assistance offered or stating the reasons for determining that training and technical assistance are not appropriate;
- d. at the discretion of the State, offer the eligible entity the opportunity to develop and implement, within 60 days after being informed of the deficiency, a quality improvement plan and to either approve the proposed plan or specify why the proposed plan cannot be approved;
- e. after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceeding to terminate the designation of or reduce the funding to the eligible entity unless the entity corrects the deficiency.

(3) Fiscal Controls, Audits, and Withholding: The State of Nebraska and its nine Community Action Agencies have fiscal controls, procedures, audits and inspections in place to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under CSBG. These procedures ensure that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget apply to the CSBG funds. The State of Nebraska and its nine Community Action Agencies also make appropriate books, documents, papers, and records available to the Secretary and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, for examination, copying, or mechanical reproduction on or off the premises of the appropriate entity upon a reasonable request for the items.

Annual audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act are completed by the State and each of the nine Community Action Agencies. The State of Nebraska's last completed audit occurred December 20, 2002 for SFY2002. Due to conversion to new computer software, last year's audit (SFY 2003) is still in process with an approved extension. This year's audit (SFY 2004) is in process and will be completed by the end of FY2004.

A list of dates of the audits of Nebraska's nine Community Action Agencies can be found in section G (1). Nebraska's Grants Management Unit and Program Manager review all agency audits and follow up on any audit findings.

(a) Assurance 676(b)(7): The State will permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 678D of the Act. The State of Nebraska seeks answers to questions from Federal Project officer. We welcome any visits to our State for purposes of monitoring program Administration and offering any technical assistance to improve operations.

(b) Assurance 676(b)(8): The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services may recommend termination of CSBG funds to any CSBG grantee. The Department will send the grantee and their governing board written notification of intent to terminate funding. The CSBG grantee will be allowed sixty (60) days from receipt of the notification of intent to terminate to present the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services with a plan to correct any noncompliance. If a correction plan is in process or the noncompliance is corrected within sixty (60) days, it will not be necessary to continue with the termination process and all appropriate parties will receive written notification by the State. If the entity continues to be out of compliance after sixty (60)

days, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will send a notification of termination in thirty (30) days which will include the reason(s) for termination and an explanation of the right to appeal. The grantee may appeal the decision to terminate funding. The appeal must be in writing and must be received within thirty (30) days of the date of the notification of termination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will issue a notice of hearing on the appeal. The notice will include:

1. Statement of the date, time, place, nature and manner of the hearing;
2. Reference to the particular section of the regulation relevant to the case;
3. A statement of the conditions to be addressed;
4. Acknowledgment of the right for representation by a legal or other representative of choice by either party.

All testimony will be recorded. A hearing officer will call the hearing to order and the parties involved will be given an opportunity to present opening statements. Thereafter, the parties shall present their evidence as directed by the hearing officer. After no more than twenty (20) days of deliberation, the hearing officer will offer the proposed decision to the Director of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. If the Director's decision sustains the termination of funding, the grantee may then request a federal review by written notification to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which will review the State's findings and issue a written statement of determination within thirty (30) days. The U.S. DHHS findings constitute the final decision for termination of CSBG funding. If the U.S. DHHS confirms the State's findings, CSBG funding to the grantee will be terminated.

(c) Assurance 676(b)10: All CAAs are required to include tri-partite board requirements in the by-laws that govern their agency. The by-laws of all Nebraska CAAs must also include a provision whereby a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or a representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on the board (or other governing mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation. The State of Nebraska reviews agency by-laws as changes occur. The State has regulation and contract requirements and monitor board composition yearly.

H. Accountability and Reporting Requirements

- (1) Results Oriented Management and Accountability:** Nebraska was one of the first states to actively focus on ROMA development and implementation. In 1997, a Nebraska ROMA Task Force was organized, with all CAAs represented. The task force determined that the true measure of outcomes is measured by the progress in changing the lives of the people served, therefore all CAAs have concentrated on family development and the provision of case management to customers

Though each agency has been developing ROMA goals for each of their programs, the ROMA task force has developed the following statewide goals for the current fiscal year::

Goal 1 Low-income people become more self-sufficient (self-sufficiency).

- Families will have an increase in earned household income through case managed. families (at least one adult) being employed for at least 90 continuous days.
- Families will have more disposable income by accessing allowable tax credits.
- Families will have healthcare benefits through their employers by obtaining employment.
- Families obtain or retain housing.

Goal 2 The conditions in which low-income people live are improved (community revitalization)

- CAA weatherization teams will create energy efficient housing.
- Housing will reach quality standards through rehabilitation.

Goal 3 Low-income people own a stake in their community.

- Families increase volunteer participation with the help and encouragement of CAAs.

Goal 4 Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.

- CAA's will continue current and develop new partnerships to provide needed services to low income families.
- Agencies will provide improved access to services for ethnic, diverse, and refugee populations.

Goal 5 Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

- Agencies resources will adequately provide services to meet the needs of low income persons and the community.
- CAA's will improve and strengthen services by addressing needs identified during the needs assessment process.
- CAA's will address issues to improve staff morale and motivation.

Goal 6 Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems (family stability.)

- Families will not be hungry.because they receive emergency food assistance.
- Families will have adequate nutrition through receiving nutritional supplements.

Nebraska's ROMA task force has recently begun the process of developing a ROMA catalog for Nebraska. This catalog will focus on development of ROMA goals in all aspects of the agency's operation. The task force plans on incorporating the National Indicators in the catalog so Nebraska's agencies have a consistent way of reporting on both. The catalog along with the development of a statewide MIS system will move Nebraska ahead in ROMA reporting. Nebraska's CAAs have recently placed an emphasis on board and staff training on the ROMA concept.

(2) Annual Report: The State of Nebraska will prepare and submit to the Secretary an annual report on the measured performance of the State and its eligible entities as described under 678E(a)(2) of the Act.

Director, Nebraska Dept. of Health & Human Services

Date